



**PRESS RELEASE
ACTIVITIES**

February 19 to April 26, 2009

**Explore the Americas
at "Butterflies Go Free"**

Montréal, January 6, 2009 – The twelfth edition of *Butterflies Go Free* will take wing on February 19 and run until April 26. This year, the spotlight will be on **New World butterflies and moths** during this must-see event organized by the Montréal Insectarium and Botanical Garden. Splendid butterflies and moths from North, Central and South America, including some local winged wonders, have already confirmed that they'll be attending! Don't miss this unique opportunity to admire some well- and lesser-known species from near and far.

Interestingly enough, the Americas are home to the world's largest variety of butterfly and moth species. The wide range of climatic conditions has created fabulously rich ecosystems full of flora and fauna in an explosion of shapes and colours. Most of these butterflies and moths come from tropical forests in Central and South America, but what about North America, Quebec in particular?

Quebec butterflies and moths, from one extreme to another!

Over the years, the seasons here in Quebec have influenced the life cycles of local butterflies and moths. Each fall, they enter diapause, which means that their metabolism slows right down until the following spring. Quebec is home to **3,051 species of butterflies and moths**. Many of them are quite unfamiliar to most people, because **85% of these species are moths**. For instance, have you ever seen a lovely lime-green luna moth, a polyphemus moth with its wingspots that resemble owls' eyes, or a cecropia moth with its wingspan of up to 16 cm, said to be the province's largest insect? Quebec butterflies and moths are certainly interesting but it's often difficult to spot them in the wild. Another great reason to come see them here, under optimal conditions!

The cradle of fair-trade butterfly farming

The Americas are renowned not only for the diversity of their butterflies and moths. This is also where the first butterfly farms were established in the early 1980s, in Costa Rica. A number of countries have since adopted this sustainable development model, which is a way of protecting forests while creating local jobs. The Montréal Insectarium carefully selects its suppliers in order to choose "fair-trade" butterflies and moths and support environmental protection and local communities.

The first Butterflies Go Free ALL-NIGHTER

Butterflies Go Free invites you to attend its all-nighter as part of the *Montreal All-Nighter of the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS*, until 2 a.m. on February 28, 2009.
A great opportunity to see these winged beauties in a completely different light!



Facts to give you “butterflies in your stomach”!

Butterflies Go Free 2009ns	
Best time to visit	Morning
Number of butterflies released during the event	Approx. 15,000
Number of butterflies in the greenhouse at any one time	Approx. 1,500
Number of butterflies released every day	Approx. 100*
Total number of species present during the event *	Over 90
Sources: Australia, Belize, Canada , Colombia, Costa Rica , Ecuador , El Salvador , England, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Peru , Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, United States and Venezuela .	19 countries
Selection criteria for chrysalises (future butterflies)	Legality, price, level of activity, longevity, showiness, adaptation to our conditions, esthetic appeal, hatching percentage, suitability to theme

* Visitors can expect to see about fifty different species on any given day.

Butterflies Go Free 2009

February 19 to April 26 - Tuesday to Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Open Monday, February 23 (school break), March 2 (school break) and April 13 (Easter)
 The Botanical Garden's Main Exhibition Greenhouse

In 2009, the Montréal Insectarium is proud to join the UNI CEF “Spread the Net” campaign for the second year, and to help prevent the spread of malaria in Africa without harming natural habitats or the environment. For more information: www.spreadthenet.org



General information and rates:
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Visual available on request